

SB 1192 (EVANS)

OIL SPILL PREVENTION/OILED WILDLIFE CARE NETWORK

THE GOAL

To permit the Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fund (OSPAF) to fully fund the Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN), which provides a vital service in aiding oiled wildlife.

BACKGROUND

The Oiled Wildlife Care Network is a statewide cooperative of skilled wildlife care providers, regulatory agencies, academic institutions and wildlife organizations that exists to aid in the rescue and rehabilitation of wildlife suffering the effects of oil coverage in California. Meeting OWCN's operational costs is vital to ensuring it is ready to respond quickly in the event of an oil spill, which often makes the difference between life and death for oiled wildlife.

Current law requires the State Board of Equalization to collect the Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fee on certain persons owning crude oil or petroleum products at marine terminals. The fee is set by the administrator of the Office of Spill Prevention and Response, and may not exceed \$0.065 per barrel of crude oil or petroleum products.

The fee is deposited into the OSPAFA in the State Treasury. Once appropriated by the Legislature, money in the fund is available for specified purposes, including covering the costs incurred by the OWCN related to training, field collection, and search and rescue activities.

The interest from a separate fund, the Oil Spill Response Trust Fund (OSRTF), has paid for equipping, operating, and maintaining the OWCN. However, due to the economic downturn, declining interest rates, and the borrowing of \$40 million from OSRTF to the General Fund, the total interest earned on the OSRTF has declined significantly, from over \$2 million in 2007-08 to approximately \$56,000 in 2011-12. The interest on the Trust Fund has been sufficient to pay the approximately \$2 million per year OWCN requires to maintain its operations. However, there is not enough money available from the Trust Fund to fully fund the OWCN this year.

This bill is needed because OWCN's primary funding source is no longer able to fully fund it in 2011-12 and onward, and the OSPAFA is limited to funding only certain costs incurred by the OWCN, which limits the state's ability to utilize the Fund to help meet the shortfall.

THIS BILL

This bill would extend the authority to use money in the OSPAFA to fully fund the OWCN, which will help ensure this vital organization continues to be ready to respond quickly and effectively in the event of an oil spill.

This bill would NOT require any money from the OSPAFA be allocated to OWCN. It simply allows the flexibility to utilize the Fund to meet the shortfalls OWCN is facing.

PREVIOUS LEGISLATION

In 2008 the Governor signed AB 2911 (Wolk), which expanded the services required of OWCN to include the provision of proactive oiled wildlife search and rescue efforts and rehabilitative care. AB 2911 also provided that the OSPAFA could be used to cover costs of the OWCN relating to training, field collection, and search and rescue activities. In 2011, AB 1112 (Huffman) raised the per barrel assessment fee from \$0.05 to \$0.065.

SUPPORT

Save Our Shores
San Francisco Baykeeper

OPPOSITION

N/A

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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